1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR Bush Negroes SR
Saramacca

609 123 ago, so long that no one knew just when it happened, instructed that no one might impart to another, a stranger, more than half of what he knew. Moreover, no young person dared to speak at all of the supernatural, and such matters as inheritance were regulated by the laws of the gods and ancestors, who punished infractions with the scourge of kunu—a term we were to hear so much in this Suriname bush.

• 302 Tenye's head as we looked down upon it was a mound of wool, with little braids, each no more than an inch or an inch and a half long, fastened by a bit of black thread, each braid pointing upwards. This was called "tataſi," we knew, and to change the subject we talked about the styles of [855] hairdressing. A child's hair usually was closely cropped, and the heads of both Yamati and Sabape looked as smooth as blackened gourds. Tenye's hair had been cut but a little while ago, a moon perhaps, when the braids had grown so long that it had been too much bother even to make the hair look well in the fashion of what was called the coiled head, or the earth furrow style. Both of these types of hairdressing consisted of braids which diverged from the center in many rows, appearing at the outer edge at intervals of one inch, or slightly more. These ends were caught up and rebraided around the head, to form either the one coil of "lollo 'ede," or the several coils of "gon wi." There were also the single long braids—the "pitto"—and the "pina bonsu" way of hair combing, where the head when properly dressed makes a design of narrow strips of scalp showing between flat ribbons of braids, which look like so many snake vertebrae, radiating from the middle of the head outwards.

"When you come back from up river, I will dress your hair," said Tenye to both of us. "You," she said, pointing, "will become an obia man in your white country, and you will look so well that your husband won't ever remember to go to his other wives."

302 954 But now Tenye's maternal aunt who had approached unobserved came to call the children away. She was not in

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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good humor, and looked with disfavor on the friendly conversation between us. Her bad temper, we learned later, had earned for her the name of Mother Snake, given her by a witty town servant of a lumber factor. The idea of dressing our hair apparently appealed to the woman, however, for it would certainly only be a reckless white who would offer his hair for combing to a stranger, since with hair any number of supernatural things might be done. With the proper formula, a few hairs, and the required ingredients she might fashion an *opo*, let us say. Now an opo serves many purposes, but its essential quality is that it gives its owner power over the one whose essence is captured in the form of hair, or a scrap of garment, or finger nails, or whatever else had touched the person against whom one has designs. The power of the possessor of the opo is to dominate the will of the other, and its particular attribute might be to function in love, or in a court of justice, or in matters of getting employment, or of receiving gifts. But an opo would be the least dangerous consequence, for an opo is not to be conceived of as being in the category of bad magic. There is the danger of *wisi*—a word which has the double meaning of poison and black magic—and hair, or finger nails, or the menstrual cloth of a woman, or perspiration are the very best materials for working wisi.

And so the good woman, known when she was among us as Tita, and as Mother Snake otherwise, saw that we offered no cause for alarm and added her advice to Tenye's in pointing out powers which we might acquire and use to spectacular advantage in our white country.

"Yes, you must make pina bonsu," she said, adding her approval, "and then your husband will prefer you to his other wives. But if you want to keep him all to yourself, you must let us cut *kamamba*—cicatrized designs—on you. An ingi kodjo here on each cheek to begin with," turning to Tenye and smiling.

And so it was all planned. The Indian cudgel, a euphemism for the buttocks, and procreative symbols were to be

here at the Mamadam, and later he would bathe with this that he might be purified. Meanwhile Sedefo and Asikasu, each in his turn, addressed the Mother of the River, each speaking his errand and asking that his journey be prospered.

Bayo came up alone when the loading was quite finished. He sat down on a crosspiece of the shrine to one side of the flat rock, poured some of the contents of the bottle on the stone, and, taking up one of the egg-shaped pieces of pemba, he rubbed it between his fingers and touched the moist stone with his whitened hands. Now with his fingers he streaked his upper arm, just below the shoulders and over the muscles which played to the swinging of the pole-stick, and then his chest and knees.

"Mother of the River, give us a safe journey. Carry the white man and his woman without sickness. I thank you."

Later, when we were about to make off, he turned to us with his ready laugh. "You will walk well, Ba'ka. I have a strong spirit. I said things to the Mother of the River under my breath which you did not hear. The Mother of the River will look after you."

"What is this log, Bayo, right here on top of the falls? Why has no one claimed it?" we asked, pointing to the log of purple-heart close by, which we had noticed lying across the Mamadam.

"When it was sent down, something happened to turn it sidewise, and it was caught so. No one will touch it. It must be that the gods wanted it for themselves."

4

There are many shrines on the river. At the G'an Creek a man would speak his prayer from a distance, call the creek "ancestor," state his errand, and continue his journey. Far up the stream, where the juncture of the Pikien Rio and the Grand Rio forms the river which the Bush Negroes call the Saramacca, is the Tapa Wata shrine. There, our men said, we would do well to avoid looking, though our boat rested across the river more than a quarter of a mile

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A NIGHT AT S'EI

As we made a tour of the village, we discussed all this with the chief and his bassia, and with the other men who accompanied us. When we reached the open place sacred to the great gods, we stopped. The shrine was a fenced-in space, perhaps eight or nine feet long and almost as wide. Inside was a slender pole, with a head carved on its top, and a cotton tunic about its middle, and this was the wife of the Great God, the chief said. The ladder with the platform on it, on which stood a bottle, was the shrine of the great Sky God. At the base of the image with the tunic were several bottles, some white clay, and a few empty glasses, and everywhere were sticks with cloth on them, many with the cloth in tatters. Where the cotton had altogether rotted away, the stick alone remained.

"Let us go in," said the chief to the men.

With the chief came a young man whose hair was braided, and who wore several obias on neck and arms. He was training to become an obia man. The bassia signaled us to follow, but the others remained outside.

The young man took up a bottle and poured some of its contents into an earthen jar, and from the jar he poured out a libation to the Earth Mother. The captain prayed, explaining that we were white people on our way to the Granman, that he was leaving in the morning to notify the Granman of our approach. Would the gods take him and us in safety, and would they see to it that all we saw should be seen with the eyes of friendship? Then he prayed for a child in the village who was ill, and for his people, and for the clan of the Granman, the Matchau lo, and for his own family. After each prayer he paused, and those outside the paling clapped their hands and sang out, "Great thanks."

Before the chief's prayer was finished, an old man came by with a bush knife in his belt, and his gun. He was just then returning from the hunt, and he stopped to thank the great gods for the kill he had made. He spoke in a whisper, but his intonation was as conversational as the chief's had been.

I: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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Jamaica

A NIGHT AT S'EI

A girl of ten or eleven led the chorus. She had a string about her waist, and the strip of cloth that was tied about her neck as a ceremonial garment hung down cape fashion. About her navel and on her face the cicatrized patterns had been completed. Her voice was the shrill voice of a child, and the answering chorus was as shrill.

"Chaka, chaka!" called the bassia who was directing the dance. He was demanding those movements which bring into play the muscles of the hips.

The women waited. They had come in all their finery, their tunics of the newest cloth, their coils of brass bracelets and anklets made to gleam by rubbing with sand, their skins dark and glistening with the oil rubbed into them for the ceremonial occasion. Those whose hair was worn in braids had redressed it that day. About their necks were beads. Their cloths were fastened tightly about them, so that their figures showed plainly.

The men, also in their best, waited with them. The iron Kromanti obias on their upper arms fitted tightly, and showed the great muscles above and below them. Those who wore beads had two or three strands of yellow and red intertwined, the small beads worn by men, small almost as okra seeds. One or two wore love obias—cowrie shells sewed on a band of white cotton, and then dipped into water which was thickened with white clay. One or two wore a small black bell-shaped obia—half the size of their thumbs—on a black string, and with swagger had swung it about so that it hung at the back. There were obias below the knee, and obias which were great brass rings for the big toe of the right foot. But one or two of the old men, and the young man who was in training for an obia man, wore a jaguar tooth on a string of native twining.

Drums . . . drums. Would there be drums?

The word was whispered from one to the other, and passed like a wave over the waiting figures.

But there would be no drums. This was the day when two gods might come. The god of the ant hill, for which men and women might dance, and the buzzard god of the men's Kromanti society.

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-6 (1928-1929) 1934
SRS Bush Negroes SRS
Saramacca

stopped to change their clothes, and make themselves fit for the reception by the Granman.

We had been warned that these preparations were not to be slighted. Those who had been to the village of the Granman told many stories of the impressiveness of the ceremonial life, and the dignity of those who were there. It was the seat of government, the home of a potentate. A visitor, whether a village chief or a man from the city, had to keep in mind that he was to appear at court. Etiquette demanded that the traveler, once arrived at the island which now hid us from the Granman and his assembled villagers, debark, remove the stains of hard traveling, and dress in a manner befitting the reception which awaited him.

But the gods had planned otherwise.

At this time of the year, though the heavy rains were over and the showers were becoming less and less frequent, it did sometimes happen that the clouds gathered at midafternoon and rain fell. To the northeast, behind us, we had seen the clouds massing, and now they hung low and glowering.

"It will rain," Sedefo called to us, just as we were making ready to see to a change of clothes, and an instant later the storm broke. With a kind of hurricane force which sent the branches toward the earth, and flares of lightning and crashes of thunder, the deluge was upon us. Not since our first days in the bush had we coped with a rain like this. The water poured down as though some giant hands were turning over endless vessels. Our tent seemed to have been taken as unaware as we were, for having sheltered us in many hard storms, it was now inadequate to keep out the downpour. We drew our raincoats tighter about us to keep off the water which came through the thatch.

Under the trees of the island the Bush Negroes were huddled. Their favorite top cloths were still in their baskets, safe out of the wet under the white man's tarpaulins. No chance now to put them on, or to use the oil which they had jealously saved for making their faces and

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123 shoulders and arms glisten, or otherwise to make themselves
[302] presentable for the reception. There was nothing to do but
to keep close to a tree-trunk, water dripping from naked
body and the strip of twisted loin cloth, teeth chattering
in the sudden chill brought on by the storm.

The head of Sungi was suddenly thrust inside our boat-tent.

"I saw the Granman. He says the storm is passing. You are to come to him as you are. It is best so. Waiting here is cold."

Turning, he ordered the paddlers to their places, and almost before the paddles were in motion, the guns began to fire.

"The Granman knows the time it takes to give a message. The Granman knows everything," said Bayo in great
[303] admiration, as the guns saluted.

Three shots, and three more. Two shots, an interval, and another coming faintly. Then a short silence, and once more the guns, in clusters of three, but now sounding from several directions.

As we rounded the head of the island the farther bank was alive with people. The rain had subsided to a drizzle. Across the strip of water which separated us from the shore we could see men and women and children standing about, the women with large food trays inverted over their heads to protect their finery. But the men, disdaining such aids, stood in the rain and looked on with undisguised curiosity. Boats joined ours from up and down the river. With the sound of the guns came hallooing, shrill cries which were the women's expression of enthusiasm, actual or ceremonial.

241 As we watched, several figures appeared on the high bank,
554 the others making way for them. Two of the men were not
622 dressed in the colored toga-like cloths that were worn by the others, but in coats of rich material which reached to their knees. They wore black top-hats with cockades at the side. One of these, we recognized as Chief And'u of S'ei. His coat was of deep crimson, bordered in blue, and his companion's a vivid yellow. Both of these men carried

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[illegible] Bush Negroes [illegible]
Saramacca

the Granman punctuated the pauses of the men, though not often their meaning.

But whatever the reports of the women, and the commands given by the Granman, the word for white man interspersed all of the morning's recitals, and the questions of the Granman and the answers often came fast.

Of the men, the Granman asked little. They came up in pairs usually, and now one, now the other took up the report. Clan names were spoken, and occasionally a village name was mentioned, but on the morning preceding the council of the chiefs, only one village was discussed, and one clan. The name of the village was the forbidden one where we had stopped for the night against the Granman's orders, and the clan was that of one group of our paddlers.

2

Early on the morning after our arrival at Asindopo Lantiwe, our paddlers came to see us in the council house. The Granman was busy outside his own house with the chiefs who had gathered for the council meeting, and these men who, like ourselves, were strangers here, came as comrades of an adventurous journey to visit with us and talk over the impressiveness of our reception and the allure of the women of the Granman's village, who were famous everywhere on the river. It was a village where chastity among the girls was closely watched, and where its women were given in marriage to the most influential men on the river.

The men were gotten up splendidly. Their bodies glistened with oil, their cloths were made of the long strips, pieced together by their women, and of patterns which the sun's rays had had no chance to pale. Sedefo's was particularly fine, we thought, but he assured us that it did not compare with the one the river had claimed. His cloth was also made of strips, but the stitching which connected them was a lacy weave, worked in triangles, and made to resemble the vertebrae of a snake. The border was of triangular

1: Herskovits & Herskovits F-5 (1929-1930) 1934
[illegible]
Surinam

pieces of red and blue cloth worked with this thread, so that again the white vertebrae showed. Bayo and Angita wore their beads, and each had a garter below the knee of the right leg. Their garters were white in color, but of a whiteness which only new, unwashed cotton has. They were about an inch and a half wide and were so tight that the muscle of the calf bulged prominently. On their upper arms were Kromanti rings of iron which, by contracting, warned the men of impending danger. In addition, Sedefo and Angita wore the bell obia of the Gankwe people, and Bayo his love obia which had come from Lamé.

"When do you go, Sedefo?"

"When the G'aman speaks. When we finish a piece of work, then we do not want to be paid at once. We do not leave at once. It would be as if we had not gone together in pleasure and wanted to be away as soon as possible. With the white man it is one thing. In the bush we do not do it so. Here in the G'aman's village, we do as we do with our own people in the bush," he paused for an instant, and looked about toward the clearing outside the palings. "There is another thing. In the G'aman's village, men cannot leave until the G'aman gives permission. When the G'aman is ready, he will call us. We will speak together. Then we will speak with him again. Then we will ask to go."

Bayo had been looking about the council house with an interest which was not unmixed with awe at the Granman's possessions, and he spoke in whispers.

"Ai, when the G'aman gives permission, then we go."

As he spoke, the cloth over the doorway was gently thrust aside. Bassia Anaisi of the Granman's village entered. He was the man who had fired the saluting gun the day of our arrival and who had at the Granman's call come to serve the visiting chiefs with rum. He now greeted each in turn but did not take down a bench. For a moment he stood there, head lowered out of deference to the character of the place where he was, then he coughed slightly and, turning to us, said, "The G'aman is ready for you. The chiefs are here."

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Saramacca

Our paddlers rose at once and left the council house. A moment later And'u entered, followed by a group of elders with closely drawn kerchiefs covering their heads. Among these only Kasanya and Bibifo were known to us. Kasanya brought his bench close to ours and moved it yet closer, with a gesture of the head that he wanted to continue the intimacy of our ten days' journey together.

"White man," he said, leaning over and whispering, "call your man from the city. At a krutu a man has someone to speak for him. So we do here."

And so, we soon saw, it was. Address in the council of the Saramacca people was always by indirection. If the Granman wished to speak to one of his chiefs, then he gave his message through another chief, though the man for whom the words were intended might be closer to him or more clearly in view.

Others came in, until the room was half filled when the Granman entered. Today he wore a printed red and black loose coat of knee length, and over it the ceremonial cloth worn by men here in the bush, so that where other men's bare shoulders showed was the sleeve of his coat. On his head were both kerchief and sun helmet. The men were anointed with oil, and many of them wore the jaguar's tooth obia. The last to enter was a man who was well past middle age, and he was followed by the young obiaman from S'ei. Both of these men wore the cloths required of men when not at work, but they were not so uncreased, or so new. Nor were their bodies bright with oil. The older man had several broad stripes of white clay from wrist to shoulder of his right arm, and from knee to pelvis on the inner left thigh. Slung from one shoulder and reaching across to the opposite thigh was a white obia made of native fiber, and on his neck were several others. To these obias were added iron bands on his arms, while below his right knee and at the ankle of his right foot were other obias made of fiber and twisted black thread.

The men we knew greeted us as they took down their benches and found places against the wall farthest from the

THE GODS SPEAK

"Yes, move closer."

The white woman now went toward the open door, and through it saw a little of the inside of the house. Like all Bush Negro houses, it had no windows of any kind, and what light there was came from this low open doorway. Near the door sat the woman who belonged to the family of the Granman. In her hand she held an egg-shaped piece of clay which she rubbed between her hands to the rhythm of her song, and at intervals lifted first one hand, then the other, rubbing the white clay on her face and arms. The thin layer of white over the dark of her skin gave to her appearance in the dark house a strange color. She swayed on her low bench as she sang, her body curving from her hips first to one side, then to the other.

"Ondyi, ondyi," she sang over and over, and with the quickening of voice, she called "bonsu."

This word "Ondyi," the women explained, when they urged the stranger to greet the god as was fitting, was the greeting of the deity, the god's way of saying their everyday word "Odi."

The eyes of the woman at the door were half-closed as she sang, and she seemed dispirited, though with the quickened swaying she did rouse herself for an instant. She had no kerchief on her head, and none about her breasts.

"Her god hasn't got her very hard," the women said. "Go inside, perhaps when you speak with him, he will begin to stir. They want you to come in."

Into the house the white woman brought her bench, and sat down close to the possessed woman at the door. When she became accustomed to the darkness of the house, she saw a pair of eyes fixed on her from the farthest wall. The figure against this wall was so much the color of the house itself that it was not until a few moments had passed that the crouching form of an old woman was distinguishable. The old woman sat motionless, her eyes fastened on the stranger.

The white woman freed herself from the intent stare of the old woman against the wall only when a sudden

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alone or with some friend, into the wax cylinders that spoke back in such mysterious fashion. When Apanto came to visit us, Bayo smiled as he saw the obia man approaching from the landing place.

"His obia is strong, but mine is strong, too. Let him sing into the machine."

Apanto was visibly surprised when he saw in operation the machine his spirit had wrecked. "The machine is not weak, Apanto," we assured him. "It has its own strength, and now it has the strength your gods have given it. For in the true, true Saramacca, a great obia man spoke his message to the Great God into it, and since then it has walked well with us."

Out of the corners of our eyes, we could see Bayo's pride.

"Sing for us, Apanto," we urged, for he had a beautiful voice. "Sing us an Apuku song."

Now Apanto sang, not once, but many times. It is true that when we asked for Apuku he sang Vodu, and when we asked for Vodu he sang Toné, and when we asked for Toné he sang Kromanti songs, and when we asked for Kromanti he sang the sacred dirges called "Papa" songs. Yet this was not otherwise than might be expected, and it was not too difficult to play the records to interested men of other villages, whose startled comments would soon tell us the kind of song he had sung.

It was another day when Apanto again sang, and some of those who had witnessed his first victory were about. One such addressed himself to Bayo, who was sitting near.

"Apanto's spirit fought the machine, and stopped it. But the machine works and sings back to Apanto. Its strength has come back to it."

"Awa, Apanto's spirit is strong," we heard Bayo reply, "but there are other strong spirits on the Saramacca."

4

Bayo had spent the night at Gankwe, and had returned resplendent with a new hairdressing. We joked with

J: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

him about it as he came to take the white man through the bush trails to a neighboring village.

One of the girls who admired him had achieved this, but how she had managed to make the minute braids was difficult for us to see, for Bayo's hair the day before, long for him, had not seemed sufficiently yielding to permit of braiding. Yet here he was, his head covered with innumerable small braids which divided the white scalp into sections and showed lines where the many regular parts had been made. This made quite a new man out of Bayo. He was no longer the warrior who went without food because he was bored with the idea of preparing the food—a woman's task or, at best, that of an old man like his great-grandfather Bibífo who had cooked on the up-river trip. Now he was a dandy.

"Ai-yo!" he crowed back as we speculated on the labor that had gone into the creation. "It took her almost all the night! It is hard work."

"She must like you, Bayo."

"She likes me well, ai!"

"Are you going to have her for your third wife?"

"Who knows? But a man doesn't marry every woman who braids his hair."

Soon Bayo and the white man were off through the bush, Tross going ahead as scout. Back and across the path he would dart and for the white man, unaccustomed to the sounds of the bush, it was difficult to tell whether the rustling he heard was caused by the dog, or by the small animals stirred up from time to time. Once a snake coiled on the path moved lazily away as they approached; Tross had disturbed it, and the snake had no mind for more encounters. Once a small animal of some sort dashed across the trail ahead, the dog in close pursuit, and for some moments we could hear them tearing through the underbrush.

"Aren't you afraid that some animal will hurt Tross, Bayo?"

"He is a good dog. And I have put strong obia on him."

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Aucaner

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Aucaner Woman and Children. Upper Cassiriko River, Dutch Guiana.

[Facing p. 24]

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

his much-loved ornamentation. Leg-bands of cotton cloth are frequently worn by both sexes, and where wire can be secured it is fashioned into arm or leg coils and paraded proudly. Many necklaces and bracelets are used because they constitute magic amulets against evil spirits. Our own bracelets and necklaces can probably be traced back to this same origin. The hair is another means of personal decoration, and therefore it is always dressed with deliberation. Carefully made partings divide the black skull into geometrical designs.

Despite the scanty nature of their clothing, the Djukas are quite modest, and never expose themselves. If a bahkra does, they avert their heads. It is a curious reflection on civilized morality that the almost naked blacks possess a large amount of dignified restraint, while the uncomfortably clothed white man is shameless in his nudity.

Here and there inside the dark huts can be seen bits of extraordinary wood carving. These are not crude utensils; every stirring-paddle or comb is a work of art worthy of a place in a museum, designed and executed in a way that is far from "primitive." The only way to acquire these objects is to bargain for them in Dutch money or tobacco, or cheap knick-knacks. Among the more distant villages money is use-

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

796 shade out strange metres on the *nanda*. There is a break; the
535 orchestra stops, and the interval is filled in with the heavy
776 booming of the *apenti*. Often the drummers seize a bush-
158 knife and batter at the pegs, stretching the dried skin to the
[534] proper tone. Mist from the river has dampened their hair, unnoticed. The dance will continue until morning; they must play until the spirit of Apuku has gone.

796 Everything is set for the climax. Some are still watching
535 while the others dance. Since the old men are too dignified,
158 their places are taken by younger men from sixteen to twenty-five. There are more women dancing than men, anyhow. The white man is wondering how it is going to end. Despite the excitement there has been no orgiastic episode.

Grand finale. There is a tremendous screech from out of the blackness beyond. Three practically naked blacks come rushing up from the river, their faces and bodies daubed
● [302] hideously with pemba dotee, the ceremonial white clay. One has stripes around his arms, belly, and legs, his face all white. Another's face is bisected with white and yellow pigment. The third is Adjobo, the medicine man; he has circles of clay on his forehead, cheeks, and chin, and rings around his neck. The presence of the ceremonial clay indicates the presence of a god. There is no doubt but that the hideousness of these men inspires a feeling of awe.

They burst into the circle of dancers and scatter them. Everyone retreats before them, with actual or pretended fright. The children become hysterical and cling frantically to their mothers for protection. Women in the crowd are cry-

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

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Bush Negro Men Visiting Paramaribo, the Capitol of Dutch Guiana.

Photo by Klein

[Facing p. 98]

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Aucaner

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Bush Negro Man and Women of the Aucaner Tribe from the Tapanahoni River, Dutch Guiana. Note scar tissue decoration on face and chest of woman at left. The central figure is "Moi-Man" (Nice Fellow), one of Dr. Kahn's guides.

[Facing p. 128]

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
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Bush Negro Boy of the Ancaner Tribe. Note scar tissue decoration on face. Cottica River, Dutch Guiana.
Photo by Kahn

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2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
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"Cow Fie" (Cow Fly), Six Feet Tall, and "Moi-Man" (Nice Fellow), Two Expert Canoemen from the Upper Tapanahoni River.
Aucaner Tribe.

[Facing p. 166]

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
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The erect combs used by the Bush Negroes are a most direct West African heritage, being found along the Upper Guinea coast, Ashanti, Cameroons, Ivory and Gold Coasts, Dahomey, Mumi, and many other regions of Africa. The wooden plates and trays are likewise found among the Ewe-speaking tribes of the West Coast.

The custom of personal decoration by the cicatrization of the skin is very common throughout many parts of Africa. Captain John Stedman remarks on this strange habit in his *Narrative of a Five Years' Expedition to Surinam:* "The Loanga Negroes distinguish themselves by puncturing or marking the skin of their sides, arms, and thighs with square, elevated figures something like dice." This custom was widespread on the Slave Coast. The scar designs varied widely according to the different tribes as well as the social position and wealth of the individual. As the Indians of South America do not practise this cicatrization, it is evident that the Bush Negroes brought it over with them from their former home.

The Bush Negro coiffure, the method of arranging the hair in plaited tufts, is found also on the Gold Coast, in Cameroons, and elsewhere in Africa. The Djuka method of weaving is similar to that of the Sudan, Gold Coast, Mandingo, Ashanti, and the Ewe. The spindle used in weaving is called by an African term, *kyekye,* a Tshi word. The woven leg band, the *sepu,* is the same as the leg bands found in Cameroons and the Upper Guinea coast in general.

The method of finding out who is responsible for the

Bush Negroes in the Colony of Surinam

/15 cont./

585 white cotton sleeping blanket, various colored cloths and panties,
[583] some earthenware, such as bowls and plates, iron pots and pans,
and the like, while he is obligated on the occasion to provide for
an ample supply of strong drink and sugar wine.

They do not have festivities, games, or dancing in connection with their marriages.

586 If a marriage is dissolved, then each of the two parties again goes to his own family; in case those concerned in it and the elders disapprove of this, however, it happens that man and wife are forced to continue to live with each other, especially when there are no substantial reasons and grievances.

593 The man is obligated to provide his wife or his wives with food, clothing, and ornaments; she, to follow the man everywhere, to cook for him, to wash, and to take care of the housekeeping.

264 The wives are neat in an exemplary fashion: plates, bowls,
252 and pans are always kept extremely clean, and they also see to it that everything is extremely clean in connection with cooking.

841 If they find themselves in a period of menstruation, they
• 302 indicate this immediately to the husband by withdrawing from his dwelling and staying in seclusion with other women; they neither cook nor do the least thing for him in this state, do not even come within sight of him, and remain secluded to the end; when they have cleaned and dressed themselves, they decorate their shoulders and arms with white stripes as a token /16/ that they have again
[386] returned to their normal state. The stripes are made by mixing
[824] pounded adroe (1) with ground chalk and water.

1. A tuberous root-stalk from the Cyperus rotundus L.

Sometimes they also smear the forehead and the neck in this way and appear thus before their husbands.

841 During their seclusion another woman, who is a member of
571 the family or possibly a female friend, daily prepares and brings the
252 food, which, however, is at the expense of the secluded wife. They perform this service for each other mutually.

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534 holds out the longest and is the fastest and most accurate performer
535 of the specific steps for this is cheered as the winner.

Banja or baljaar is one of the true African dances. This name is also given to the African guitar, a musical instrument formerly generally known in the colony, but now totally vanished. This dance is performed to the beat of the two drums and the [224] kwakwa stool. For this dance the women provide themselves with a saka-saka, a toy having the shape of a great rattle and made from a calabash filled with corals or pits of the Canna indica and Canna lutea, also called viengee by them. They turn and shake this saka-saka according to the beat of the song taken up by them, which produces a peculiarly strange sound.

Chapter XIX

Clothing, Ornaments, Tattooing

291 Their clothing is very simple. The women ordinarily wear merely a piece of colored linen or cotton strip, called bont, two ells long and one and a quarter ells wide. They wrap this around their middle and allow it to hang down below the knee joints, calling it pangi. This undergarment of the Negro women is thus named [301] after pano (Spanish) and pagne (French). As a rule they have the upper body bare, while around the neck, the wrists, and the ankles • 302 they wear strings of coral, which greatly take their fancy. They usually plait the head hair into a large number of small braids and bind the ends of these with white cotton threads. Some of them wear their hair combed out, as a result of which their heads, 301 seen from a distance, resemble large mop-heads. They are very fond of blood corals, which are greatly valued among them for ornamentation.

[292] When they celebrate a festival, they also wear a large number of colored cloths of cotton or muslin around the neck, and further adorn themselves with copper and iron rings around the wrists, among which there are strings of coral in the same manner

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Fig. 11. Threshing the rice ears on a sack with the feet. -- Tapanahoni, Driestabbetje, June 1952.

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Fig. 12. The fruits of the pina palm are collected in a basket; a beverage is made from the fruit-pulp. -- Marowijne, Albina, April 1953.

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/152 cont./
245 white cucumber-like fruit flesh is eaten. The taste is refreshingly
262 tart.

249 Ricinus /castor-oil plant/ (asapata).
789 It to be found in all villages and especially on refuse heaps.
802 The leaf is used for obia, the oil from the kernels as a hair oil.

Pepper (pépé).
244 Grows as a small shrub near the houses or along the edge of
[252] the village. The variety with small red fruit occurs especially frequently. The fruit is eaten boiled in meat soup.

Koemboe (komoe).
245 Stands in individual specimens in and along the villages and
[252] in the forest. The kernels of this palm are gladly eaten, softened with warm water and pounded into koemboe soup. The fruit is ripe in February-May. A large variety is patawah.

Maripa (maipa).
[262] Absent in not a single village. The fruit provides a white,
[252] fatty fruit-flesh that is eaten fresh (May). The pits are dried and pounded to pieces with a stone in order to obtain the three kernels. After having dried these (in the sun), one boils from them a food oil.

Awarra palms (awá).
[263] Stand in little groups in each Bush Negro village. The orange fruit, which is ripe in February-March, sometimes also in June

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Fig. 1. Boni type.

Schwartz--107a K-S (1948-1958) 1961 SRS Bush Negroes SRS Boni

/facing p. 76/

Fig. 15.— House type of the Refugee Blacks; Loabi village (Djuka of the Upper Tapanahoni).

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153 791 787 782 [789] containing seeds). Sometimes, when a god has entered a pupil, the teacher puts the latter's passivity to the test by insulting the god with the help of the drum. The Kumfoti gets angry, breaks bottles and swallows ground glass, walks in the fire, hits himself with machete blows, all without any wound resulting, they say, on the body of its bearer.

[302] These frenzied dances, whose participants completely covered with pemba (white clay) are as if hallucinated, have a bizarre aspect which is perceptible to some of the host themselves. They do not have any secret character and constitute, [522] on the contrary, a fine spectacle for the village people. The spectators double up with laughter at the contortions and strange [521] actions which the gods inspire in those possessed. They are talked about at length /207/ afterward in the evenings, humorists imitating what they saw done there, without any fear whatever of irritating the gods.

791 787 346 Each "teacher for Kumfoti" owns a small gadu 3ou in which are lined up the implements of the cult. One finds in general in these chapels a post crudely carved in the shape of a human bust, a block of stone, jaguar skulls, some kakati (shrub stalks with a spontaneous double bend, thought to be the prop of spirits in the bush), and a saka (maraka), the whole sprinkled with white clay (pemba). One finds also beside the door a seat and a trough which are used for the ablutions of the pupils.

153 791 787 788 While bathing his body with the infusion of leaves prepared by the teacher, the neophyte repeats, in ordinary language, a series of invocations: "Come to me, enter into me. But before entering into me, it is necessary to teach me the things of thy country; O God, when thou art in me, may I be able to dance on broken glass without its cutting me; may I be able to dance in fire without its burning me. If tomorrow someone takes a machete to hurt me, he shall not be able to come forward. If someone takes a gun to shoot me, (his weapon) must break, must not be able to take off. If someone is sick, make an 3ou3 for him, he must recover."

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Fig. 26. Woman possessed by a Papa gudu god.

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Fig. 27. Dance of possession (Papa gudu worship).